

Department of State

§ 92.55

(d) Before a person commissioned by the court, and a person so commissioned shall have the power by virtue of the commission to administer any necessary oath and take testimony.

[60 FR 51722, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.52 “Deposition on notice” defined.

A *deposition on notice* is a deposition taken before a competent official after reasonable notice has been given in writing by the party or attorney proposing to take such deposition to the opposing party or attorney of record. Notarizing officers, as defined by 22 CFR 92.1, are competent officials for taking depositions on notice in foreign countries (see § 92.51). This method of taking a deposition does not necessarily involve the issuance of a commission or other court order.

[60 FR 51722, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.53 “Commission to take depositions” defined.

A *commission to take depositions* is a written authority issued by a court of justice, or by a quasi-judicial body, or a body acting in such capacity, giving power to take the testimony of witnesses who cannot appear personally to be examined in the court or before the body issuing the commission. In Federal practice, a commission to take depositions is issued only when necessary or convenient, on application and notice. The commission indicates the action or hearing in which the depositions are intended to be used, and the person or persons required to take the depositions, usually by name or descriptive title (see § 92.55 for manner of designating notarizing officers). Normally a commission is accompanied by detailed instructions for its execution.

[22 FR 10858, Dec. 27, 1957, as amended at 60 FR 51723, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.54 “Letters rogatory” defined.

In its broader sense in international practice, the term *letters rogatory* denotes a formal request from a court in which an action is pending, to a foreign court to perform some judicial act. Examples are requests for the taking of evidence, the serving of a summons, subpoena, or other legal notice, or the

execution of a civil judgment. In United States usage, letters rogatory have been commonly utilized only for the purpose of obtaining evidence. Requests rest entirely upon the comity of courts toward each other, and customarily embody a promise of reciprocity. The legal sufficiency of documents executed in foreign countries for use in judicial proceedings in the United States, and the validity of the execution, are matters for determination by the competent judicial authorities of the American jurisdiction where the proceedings are held, subject to the applicable laws of that jurisdiction. See § 92.66 for procedures in the use of letters rogatory requesting the taking of depositions in foreign jurisdictions.

§ 92.55 Consular authority and responsibility for taking depositions.

(a) *Requests to take depositions or designations to execute commissions to take depositions.* Any United States notarizing officer may be requested to take a deposition on notice, or designated to execute a commission to take depositions. A commission or notice should, if possible, identify the officer who is to take depositions by his official title only in the following manner: “Any notarizing officer of the United States of America at (name of locality)”. The notarizing officer responsible for the performance of notarial acts at a post should act on a request to take a deposition on notice, or should execute the commission, when the documents are drawn in this manner, provided local law does not preclude such action. However, when the officer (or officers) is designated by name as well as by title, only the officer (or officers) so designated may take the depositions. In either instance, the officer must be a disinterested party. Rule 28(c) of the Rules of Civil Procedure for the district courts of the United States prohibits the taking of a deposition before a person who is a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, or who is a relative or employee of such attorney or counsel, or who is financially interested in the action.

(b) *Authority in Federal law.* The authority for the taking of depositions,

charging the appropriate fees, and imposing the penalty for giving false evidence is generally set forth in 22 U.S.C. 4215 and 4221. The taking of depositions for federal courts of the United States is further governed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. For the provisions of law which govern particularly the taking of depositions to prove the genuineness of foreign documents which it is desired to introduce in evidence in any criminal action or proceeding is a United States federal court, see 18 U.S.C. 3491 through 3496.

(c) *Procedure where laws of the foreign country do not permit the taking of depositions.* In countries where the right to take depositions is not secured by treaty, notarizing officers may take depositions only if the laws or authorities of the national government will permit them to do so. Notarizing officers in countries where the taking of depositions is not permitted who receive notices or commissions for taking depositions should return the documents to the parties from whom they are received explaining why they are returning them, and indicating what other method or methods may be available for obtaining the depositions, whether by letters rogatory or otherwise.

[60 FR 51722, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.56 Summary of procedure for taking depositions.

In taking a deposition on notice or executing a commission to take depositions, a notarizing officer should conform to any statutory enactments on the subject in the jurisdiction in which the depositions will be used. He should also comply with any special instructions which accompany the request for a deposition on notice or a commission. Unless otherwise directed by statutory enactments or special instructions, the officer should proceed as follows in taking depositions:

(a) Request the witnesses, whose testimony is needed, to appear before him; or, at the request of any party to the action or proceeding, request designated persons to supply him or the requesting party with needed records or documents in their possession, or copies thereof;

(b) When necessary, act as interpreter or translator, or see that ar-

rangements are made for some qualified person to act in this capacity;

(c) Before the testimony is taken, administer oaths (or affirmations in lieu thereof) to the interpreter or translator (if there is one), to the stenographer taking down the testimony, and to each witness;

(d) Have the witnesses examined in accordance with the procedure described in §§ 92.57 to 92.60;

(e) Either record, or have recorded in his presence and under his direction, the testimony of the witnesses;

(f) Take the testimony, or have it taken, stenographically in question-and-answer form and transcribed (see § 92.58) unless the parties to the action agree otherwise (rules 30(c) and 31(b), Rules of Civil Procedure for the District Courts of the United States);

(g) Be actually present throughout the examination of the witnesses, but recess the examination for reasonable periods of time and for sufficient reasons;

(h) Mark or cause to be marked, by identifying exhibit numbers or letters, all documents identified by a witness or counsel and submitted for the record.

[22 FR 10858, Dec. 27, 1957, as amended at 60 FR 51723, Oct. 3, 1995]

§ 92.57 Oral examination of witnesses.

When a witness is examined on the basis of oral interrogatories, the counsel for the party requesting the deposition has the right to conduct a direct examination of the witness without interruption except in the form of objection by opposing counsel. The opposing counsel has the same right on cross-examination. Cross-examination may be followed by redirect and recross-examinations until the interrogation is complete. The notarizing officer taking the deposition should endeavor to restrain counsel from indulging in lengthy colloquies, digressions, or asides, and from attempts to intimidate or mislead the witness. The notarizing officer has no authority to sustain or overrule objections but should have them recorded as provided in § 92.59. Instead of taking part in the